

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

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USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 SAI-01 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00

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P R 111440Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9560

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 5225

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GR BU

SUBJ: MFA OFFICIAL COMMENTS ON CARAMANLIS VISIT TO BULGARIA

REF A, ATHENS 5054 B, SOFIA 1393

1. ACCORDING TO MFA OFFICIAL DRAKOULARAKOS JULY 10 (DIRECTORATE FOR SOCIALIST STATES OF EUROPE AND ASIA), PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS' JULY 2-4 VISIT TO BULGARIA (REFTELS) WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL FROM THE GREEK GOVERNMENT POINT OF VIEW. LIKE THE GREEK AMBASSADOR IN SOFIA, DRAKOULARAKOS STRESSED THAT IMPROVEMENT IN GREEK-BULGARIAN RELATIONS WAS THE MOST POSITIVE RESULT OF THE VISIT. HE INDICATED THAT THE EARLIER MISTRUST EXISTING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD NOW BEEN ERASED. ZHIVKOV'S COMMENT TO CARAMANLIS THAT BULGARIA HAS NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS ON GREECE WAS, HE SAID, AN INDICATION OF A NEW SPIRIT OF GOOD WILL.

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2. DRAKOULARAKOS NOTED THAT SPECIAL ATTENTION WAS

GIVERN DURING THE VISIT TO PREPARING THE GROUNDWORK FOR GREATER MULTILATERAL BALKAN COOPERATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELDS OF ENERGY AND TRANSPORT, AND IN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL MATTERS. HE ADDED THAT WITH THE POSITIVE BULGARIAN RESPONSE TO THIS GREEK INITIATIVE --AND EARLIER FAVORABLE REACTIONS BY THE ROMANIANS AND YUGOSLAVS IN THE COURSE OF CARAMANLIS' VISITS THERE --PLANS NOW CAN BE PURSUED FOR A MEETING OF EXPERTS, AND ULTIMATELY OF MINISTERS, ON THESE SUBJECTS. DRAKOULARAKOS ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO TIMETABLE ESTABLISHED FOR SUCH MEETINGS AS YET. HE INDICATED THAT AS A BALKAN NATION TURKEY WOULD OF COURSE BE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY SUCH MEETINGS IF IT CHOSE.

3. TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER HAD RAISED WITH THE BULGARIAN OFFICIALS ANY GREEK-TURKISH BILATERAL PROBLEMS (OTHER THAN CYPRUS), DRAKOULARAKOS SAID THAT THE GREEK SIDE HAD PRESENTED ITS POSITION ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF. EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON GREECE'S INITIATIVE IN PROPOSING THAT THE DISPUTE BE SUBMITTED TO THE ICJ FOR SETTLEMENT. THE BULGARIANS MADE NO SPECIAL COMMENTS ON THE MATTER. DRAKOULARAKOS THEN STATED THAT A RESULT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISITS TO SOFIA, BUCHAREST AND BELGRADE WAS THAT TURKEY SHOULD NOW FEEL A CERTAIN ISOLATION. HOWEVER, HE ALLEGED THIS WAS NOT AL ALL THE PURPOSE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S TRIPS BUT RATHER THE "NATURAL" OUTCOME OF THEM.

4. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISITS TO THE THREE BALKAN CAPITALS REPRESENTED IN ANY WAY A SHIFT IN GREEK FOREIGN POLICY DRAKOULARAKOS ANSWERED IN THE NEGATIVE. HE ASSERTED THAT GREECE STILL BELONG TO NATO (QUICKLY ADDING --"THE POLITICAL SIDE OF NATO") AND TO THE WEST. HE EXPLAINED HOWEVER THAT DUE TO THE ANOMALY OF THE SEVEN-YEAR PERIOD OF MILITARY RULE IN GREECE, GREEK FOREIGN
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POLICY IN THE BALKANS HAD BEEN DORMANT. HE SAID THE PRIME MINISTER HAD UNDERTAKEN HIS TRIPS TO REVIVE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH GREECE'S NORTHERN NEIGHBORS. DRAKOULARAKOS STATED THAT NO DATE HAD BEEN SET FOR THE RETURN VISIT OF TODOROV TO GREECE -- BUT HE WAS OF THE PERSONAL OPINION THAT IT WOULD NOT BE BEFORE NOVEMBER.

5. DRAKOULARAKOS THEN MENTIONED THAT MINISTER OF COMMERCE VARVITSIOTIS WOULD BE VISITING ALBANIA

DURING THE AUTUMN WITH THE PURPOSE OF UPDATING THE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE STRESSED THERE IS SOME SIGNIFICANCE TO THE VISIT IN THAT IT WILL BE THE FIRST GREEK MINISTERIAL VISIT TO ALBANIA SINCE THE RESTORATION OF RELATIONS. DRAKOULARAKOS DID NOT THINK, HOWEVER, THAT ALBANIA WOULD JOIN THE OTHER THREE BALKAN NATIONS IN ANY MULTILATERAL COOPERATION WITH GREECE; "THE TIME IS NOT RIGHT YET", HE ADDED.

6. COMMENT: THE AMBASSADOR HAS ALSO HAD BRIEF DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS AND DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF ABOUT THE CARAMANLIS VISIT TO BULGARIA AND THEIR OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS ARE CONSISTENT WITH AND CONFIRM THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS MESSAGE AND REFTELS. BITSIOS SAID THAT BULGARIAN OFFICIALS WERE GENERALLY RECEPTIVE TO REINVIGORATING BILATERAL RELATIONS AND TO SOME GREEK INITIATIVES, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL FIELDS. BITSIOS INDICATED THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO GO SOMEWHAT FARTHER IN INCREASED COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES IN NON-CONTROVERSIAL FIELDS, SUCH AS THE ENVIRONMENT, BUT THE BULGARIANS WERE RETICENT. BITSIOS ALSO POOH-POOHED SPECULATION IN SOME OF THE GREEK PRESS THAT THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT WAS TOYING WITH A POLICY OF INCREASED NON-ALIGNMENT, STATING CATEGORICALLY THAT GREECE REMAINED FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND ITS SECURITY TIES WITH THE US AND ITS ALLIES. AVEROFF SAID THAT CARAMANLIS WAS INTRIGUED BY THE RECEPTION ACCORDED HIM IN BULGARIA WHICH HE SAID WAS THE WARMEST AND MOST CORDIAL HE HAD RECEIVED FROM ANY OF HIS FOREIGN TRAVEL SINCE HIS RETURN TO THE POST OF PRIME MINISTER.
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AVEROFF SAID THAT HE AND CARAMANLIS, REALIZING THAT SUCH A RECEPTION HAD BEEN CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED AND UNDOUBTEDLY "PRE-CHECKED WITH MOSCOW," ASSUMED IT WAS ONE MORE STRAW BLOWING FAVORABLY IN THE OVERALL WINDS OF DETENTE. ONE GOVERNMENT MINISTER, WHO ASKED NOT TO BE IDENTIFIED BUT WHO IS IN A POSITION TO KNOW, ALSO TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT ZHIVKOV TOLD CARAMANLIS THAT THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT NEITHER EXPECTED NOR WANTED YUGOSLAVIA'S "DISINTEGRATION" ON TITO'S DEMISE. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, CARAMANLIS WAS NOT ACCEPTING THIS AT FACE VALUE BUT THOUGHT THAT ZHIVKOV'S TAISING IT WAS OF MORE THAN PASSING SIGNIFICANCE. KUBISCH

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